

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 8**  
**INCIDENT NO. 97-015**  
**DATE: MARCH 31, 1997      TIME: 12:00 P.M.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring flood statewide.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: A LaMoure County woman and her daughter were missing and presumed dead after their pickup and horse trailer struck a washout on a county road on Bonehill Creek early March 29. Efforts to retrieve the vehicle were suspended after swift currents posed a safety hazard for divers. Workers will resume efforts on March 31, by temporarily diverting the creek's water flow so that divers can again attempt to retrieve the pickup.
3. DAMAGES: As temperatures rise to the 50s and 60s statewide, the National Weather Service has issued flood warnings and statements for rivers and tributaries throughout central and southeastern North Dakota. Sites where these waterways rose near or above flood stage were all located south of I-94.

A flood warning continued early March 31 for Apple Creek in Burleigh County, where flood waters levels have been gradually receding. The Weather Service recorded the creek's level at 15.83 feet on March 31; flood stage is 15 feet.

Flood warnings were also issued for the James River for LaMoure and Dickey Counties. The Cottonwood, Maple and Bonehill Creeks have been flooding. Plugged culverts and snow-filled ditches are forcing waters to flow out of their banks, inundating secondary roads. The Weather Service expects the river level at the city of LaMoure to crest at 15.7 to 16 feet by April 1. In Dickey County, the river is rising approximately one-half foot per day. The LaMoure County Sheriff's Office reported that the river channel still contains ice, which creates a backwater effect and increases the flood threat.

Farther east, the Sheyenne River near Lisbon had risen above its 11-foot flood stage to 11.3 feet on March 31. The river rose nearly three feet each day during the March 29-30 weekend.

The Maple River is out of its banks near Enderlin in Ransom County. River gauges indicated the river was at 8.73 feet on March 31; flood stage is six feet. The river had peaked the previous day at 10.3 feet. The Weather Service received reports of flood waters in Enderlin's city park. A considerable amount of ice in the river's channel near Enderlin may cause rapid fluctuations of one to three feet in river readings.

Motorists traveling on I-94 on March 31 reported up to six inches of water was flowing over a one-mile stretch of the eastbound and westbound lanes, between Oriska and Tower City. Traffic was reduced to one lane for both directions.

Barnes County officials report 15 sites where water was flowing over county roads on March 31.

The Weather Service canceled its flood warning for the Cannonball River for eastern Sioux and southeastern Morton Counties. Although flood waters were receding, the water was out of its banks at some locations during the March 29-30 weekend. On March 31, the river was at its 10-foot flood stage at Breien in Sioux County.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from the first report.

STATE: No change from the first report.

FEDERAL: No change from the first and second reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: City of Grand Forks volunteers continue their efforts to fill sandbags. By March 29, volunteers had filled 314,210 sandbags; their goal is 500,000.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was staffed during the Easter weekend to receive requests for assistance and reports of flood damages.

The N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT) is monitoring a one-mile stretch of I-94, where water is over both the eastbound and westbound lanes, and has flagged the area for motorists.

Plans are in place for the N.D. National Guard to begin ice dusting a 38-mile stretch of the Red River on March 31. The river will be dusted from Grand Forks north to N.D. Highway 17 in Walsh County. The National Guard's efforts are being supported by the city of Grand Forks, which has provided more than 10,000 sandbags. The N.D. DOT and the National Guard had previously used sand for ice dusting efforts along the Sheyenne and Red Rivers, an effort to enhance snowmelt, reduce the formation of ice jams, and improve the flow of water during the spring melt. Surveillance of ice dusting sites along the Sheyenne River at Fort Ransom indicated that the sand is assisting ice to break up.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed advanced flood preparedness measures in Harwood and Wahpeton. Those measures include levee construction and ring diking.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: None at this time.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports for the spring flood, Devils Lake flood and winter storm are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

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Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director